

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 180818

FOLLOWING REPEAT LAGOS 8603 ACTION SECSTATE ADDIS ABABA
BRUSSELS GENEVA KADUNA JULY 12.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8603

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, NI, ELAB

SUBJECT REVIEW OF LABOR SITUATION IN NIGERIA

1. EMBASSY POLITICAL/LABOR ASSISTANT, IN A
CHANCEENCOUNTER ON JULY 7 WITH FMG LABOR COMMISSIONER HENRY
ADEFOPE, TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A GENERAL DISCUSSION ON
THE LABOR SITUATION IN NIGERIA. THE FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE COVERED.

2. FMG FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE NIGERIA LABOR CONGRESS (NLC):
THE FMG HAS REJECTED THE 5,000,000 NAIRA BUDGET AND ANNUAL
SUBVENTION OF 50,000 NAIRA WHICH WERE REQUESTED BY THE NLC IN
MAY. (SEE LAGOS A-55). ADEFOPE DESCRIBED THE NLC BUDGET AS
A "HUGE JOKE" ADDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT HAVE APPROVED
IT. HE DISCLOSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO MAKE A "SMALL
GRANT" TO THE NLC TO ENABLE IT TO GET OFF THE GROUND AND THIS MAY
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BE ANNOUNCED BEFORE THE END OF AUGUST THIS YEAR.

3. NLC SECRETARIAT: THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONCLUDED AN AGREEMENT
WITH RETIRED JUSTICE F. COKER, THE LANDLORD OF THE FORMER
TRADE UNION INSTITUTE (TUI) AT IKORODU ROAD, TO LEASE THE BUILDING
TO THE NLC FOR ITS SECRETARIAT. THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF WORKS
WILL SOON START TO WORK ON THE BUILDING BEFORE HANDING IT

OVER TO THE NLC. ADEFOPE DISCLOSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS INSTRUCTED POLICE, WHO NOW OCCUPY THE BUILDING, TO MOVE OUT SO THE MINISTRY OF WORKS CAN CLEAR THE GROUND AND MAKE NECESSARY RENOVATIONS.

4. WAGE FREEZE: THE COMMISSIONER SAID THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO LIFT THE EMBARGO ON WAGE INCREASES UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR WHEN, IT IS HOPED, INFLATION IN NIGERIA MAY HAVE BEEN STOPPED.

5. AFRICAN-AMERICAN LABOR CENTRE (AALC): THE COMMISSIONER SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS FULLY AWARE THAT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AALC IN NIGERIA ARE NOT DETRIMENTAL TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GROWTH OF THE COUNTRY AND THE GOVERNMENT IS CONVINCED IT IS CONCERNED ONLY WITH WORKERS' EDUCATION. SINCE THE BAN ON INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION IS STILL IN FORCE, HOWEVER, THE AALC "CANNOT BE AN EXCEPTION." THE COMMISSIONER ADDED THAT IT IS DOUBTFUL THE GOVERNMENT WILL LIFT THE BAN ON INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION BUT ADDED THE NLC "IS FREE TO MAINTAIN FRATERNAL RELATIONS WITH ITS COUNTERPARTS OUTSIDE NIGERIA." HE MENTIONED THAT HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM AALC IN 1976, ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION OF ITS POSITION IN NIGERIA AND HAD REPLIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT TAKEN A DECISION ON IT.

6. LABOR AND POLITICS: THE COMMISSIONER SAID HE HAD HEARD REPORTS THAT THE NIGERIAN SOCIALIST GROUP IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PLANNING TO REACTIVATE THE NIGERIAN LABOR PARTY AND TO RUN CANDIDATES IN THE FEDERAL AND STATE ELECTIONS IN 1979. HE BELIEVES THERE IS NOTHING WRONG IN CONTESTING THE ELECTIONS BUT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG IF THESE PEOPLE SOLICIT FINANCIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT FROM ABROAD. THE COMMISSIONER SAID, HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT IS KEEPING AN EYE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIALIST GROUP IN THE NIGERIA LABOR MOVEMENT.

7. INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO): THE COMMISSIONER SAID THE FMG STILL PRESSES FOR THE RETURN OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE ILO. HE SAID HE WAS MANDATED BY THE FMG TO SPEAK TO EUROPEAN FRIENDS OF THE U.S. TO URGE THE U.S. TO RETURN TO ILO AND HE HAD CARRIED OUT THIS MANDATE AT THE LAST SESSION OF THE ILO. HE CONDEMNED THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNION (WFTU) FOR SENDING A NOTE TO ILO IN JUNE 1977 AFTER THE BAN ON NIGERIAN LABOR LEADERS, INCLUDING W.O. GOODLUCK, ALLEGING INFRINGEMENT OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN NIGERIA. (FYI: GOODLUCK WAS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMUNIST ALL-AFRICAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (AATUF), A MEMBER UNION OF WFTU. END FYI.) THE COMMISSIONER SAID THE FMG DONATED 60,690 NAIRA AT THE LAST ILO CONFERENCE AS A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION IN RESPONSE TO ILO'S APPEAL TO MEMBER STATES FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ENABLE IT TO MEET ITS FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

BECAUSE OF THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM ILO. HE ADDED THAT OUT OF THE 60,690 NAIRA DONATED, THE FMG DIRECTED THE ILO TO SPEND 40,690 NAIRA TO HELP RESTORE THE RESOURCES FOR "PROGRESS FOR ACTION FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA" WITH RESPECT TO NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE ILO BUDGET. THE COMMISSIONER PRAISED THE ACTIVITIES OF THE "WESTERN BLOC" AT THE 64TH SESSION OF ILO FOR CANVASSING FOR SUPPORT OF THE NIGERIA WORKERS' DELEGATE AND PRESIDENT OF THE NLC, H.A. SUNMONU, AND THE WORKERS' ADVISER, JONAS ABAM, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE DOCKWORKERS' UNION OF NIGERIA TO SERVE ON THE ILO PANEL ON THE WORKING PARTY ON THE STRUCTURE OF ILO. THE "WESTERN BLOC" ALWAYS SUPPORTS NIGERIA, HE ADDED JOKINGLY.

8. ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN TRADE UNION UNITY (OATUU): THE
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COMMISSIONER SAID THAT THE FMG WILL SUPPORT THE NLC IN PLAYING AN "IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE OATUU. HE SUGGESTED: "WHAT PREVENTS THE SECRETARIAT OF OATUU FROM BEING LOCATED IN NIGERIA?"

9. LABOR STATISTICS: THE COMMISSIONER SAID THERE IS A BACKLOG IN THE COMPILATION OF STATISTICS FOR THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND THE MINISTRY IS CONSIDERING THE APPOINTMENT OF LABOR OFFICERS TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT LABOR STATISTICS REGULARLY AND TO PUBLISH A MONTHLY REPORT ON A REGULAR BASIS. EASUM UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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